

PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION MINUTES

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2001

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

I. ROLL CALL:

Present, Commissioners: Parsons, Mathewson, Gibson, Petersen

Absent: Wiecha, Torre (Commissioner Torre arrived at 7:04 p.m.)

Present, Staff: Principal Planner de Melo (PP), City Attorney Savaree (CA), Recording Secretary Flores

II. AGENDA STUDY SESSION: None

III. AGENDA AMENDMENTS: None

IV. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments): None

V. CONSENT CALENDAR: None

VI. STUDY SESSION: None

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing -1240 Academy Way: To consider a Single-Family Design Review to construct a 517 sq. ft. addition to an existing single-story, single-family residence for a total of 2399 sq. ft., inclusive of garage and covered porches, where a maximum of 3,500 sq. ft. is allowed. (Appl. No. 01-0065) APN: 044-290-260; Zoned: R1-B; CEQA: Categorical Exemption, Section 15303, Class 3(c); Jerry and Etsuco Joslen, Owners; Dan Biermann, Applicant

PP de Melo presented the staff report, recommending approval, and the applicant was available to answer questions.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Torre, to close the public hearing. Motion passed.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Petersen, to adopt the Resolution approving a Single-Family Design Review for 1240 Academy Way, subject to conditions attached.

Ayes: Mathewson, Petersen, Gibson, Torre, Parsons

Noes: None

Absent: Wiecha

Motion passed 5/0/1

Chair Parsons stated that the item may be appealed to the City Council within ten days,

Public Hearing - 2130 Ralston Avenue: Conditional Use Permit and Design Review to allow a wireless communication facility by Sprint PCS. The project consists of three-panel antennas on the rooftop of the existing office building, a three-foot screen wall to screen the existing and proposed antennas on the building and an equipment cabinet to accommodate Sprint's equipment to be located in the basement of the office building. This project also includes co-location of this facility with three other wireless telecommunication facilities on the same site. (Appl. No. 01 -0093); APN: 044-274-120; Zoned: E-1 (Professional Office); CEQA: Categorical Exemption, Section 15303, Class 3(c); David and Leslie Vallergera, Owners; Kelly Pepper, The Alaris Group, Applicant

PP de Melo summarized the staff report, recommending approval, and answered questions from the Commission.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By C Gibson, seconded by C Torre, to close the public hearing. Motion passed.

Chair Parsons stated that he did not care for the parapet look and the cumulative effect of additional antennas along the Ralston scenic corridor, but felt that additional landscaping would be a reasonable mitigation. PP de Melo stated that the project could be conditioned to require that a landscape plan be brought back to the Commission. City Attorney Savaree suggested that, if the approval is going to be conditioned on having a landscape plan, the Commission should be specific about what landscaping will be required so that the applicant could determine whether or not they could accept that condition. C Mathewson stated the reason he would vote no on this item was due to aesthetics concerns based on the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, of which allows jurisdictions to disapprove wireless communications applications only based on design/aesthetic issues.

MOTION: By Chair Parsons, seconded by C Petersen, to adopt the resolution approving the Conditional Use Permit and Design Review for a wireless communication facility at 2130 Ralston Avenue, with the conditions as attached, and including the requirement that a landscape plan be brought back to the Commission providing for six 15 gallon minimum sized trees.

Ayes: Parsons, Petersen, Gibson

Noes: Torre, Mathewson

Absent: Wiecha

Motion Passed 3/2/1

Chair Parsons announced that the item may be appealed to the City Council within ten days.

Public Hearing – 2605 Somerset Drive: To consider a Conditional Use Permit, Floor Area Exception and Single-Family Design Review application for an existing 2,846 square foot home at 2605 Somerset Drive to remodel and add 967 square feet to the residence for a total of 3,813 square feet.(Appl. No. 01-0109); APN: 045-452-060; Zoned: PD; CEQA Status: Exempt; Clarence Wong, Owner; John C. Lee, Applicant

C Mathewson recused himself from discussion of this item, as he had been absent when the item was before the Commission on June 6, 2000, and had not been able to listen to the tape of the meeting.

PP de Melo presented the staff report, recommending approval.

Clarence Wong, Owner, summarized for the Commission the changes made since the last hearing, noting that the neighbors on Hallmark have dropped their previous objections to the project but that the neighbor at 2609 Somerset Drive had not been willing to discuss the plans. He showed slides depicting a sun/shade study the architect had prepared to address the sunlight impact to the house at 2609 Somerset Drive.

Chair Parsons opened the public hearing.

Mr. Aoyagi, 2609 Somerset Drive, stated that he felt the sun/shade study was not an accurate way to measure the sunlight, which he felt should be conducted using time-lapsed photography, and he objected to the removal of three 10-inch trees from the back yard. He also read a statement from his wife wherein she objected to the loss of her view of the sky and felt that the addition will reduce the value of their property.

Residents Ted Holman and Gail Gross spoke in favor of the project as redesigned.

MOTION: By Commissioner Torre, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, to close the public hearing. Motion passed.

Discussion followed regarding the neighbor's concerns with the consensus that the loss of direct sunlight will be negligible and that a "view" as called out in the General Plan is interpreted as a "vista" (i.e., Bay or ridgeline) as opposed to a view of the sky.

MOTION: By Commissioner Torre, seconded by Commissioner Gibson, to adopt the resolution approving the Conditional Use Permit, Floor Area Exception and Single-Family Design Review for 2605 Somerset Drive, with the conditions as attached.

Ayes: Torre, Gibson, Petersen, Parsons

Noes: None

Recuse Mathewson

Absent: Wiecha

Motion passed 4/0/1/1

Chair Parsons announced that the item can be appealed to the City Council within ten days.

Public Hearing – 2936 Alhambra - To consider a Design Review Permit, Grading Plan, Geologic Review, Arborist Report and Tree Removal Permit, to allow construction of a 3,095 square foot single-family residence on a 9,904 square foot site. Approximately 40 cubic yards of soil would be exported from the site. (Appl. No. 01-0055) APN: 043-232-100, 043-232-220; Zoned: R-1/B; CEQA Status: Categorically Exempt; Larry Siebert and Shirley Nichols, Applicants/Owners

By prior agreement, this item was continued to the November 20, 2001 Planning Commission Meeting without discussion.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: None

IX. REPORTS, STUDIES, UPDATES, AND COMMENTS

Chair Parsons commented on the recent installation of an unsightly pipe/utility system at the west entrance to Notre Dame High School. He suggested that it should be a work item for the Planning staff to arrange some sensitivity training with the Public Works, Water, and Fire Departments regarding what can be done to enhance the appearance of the City of Belmont.

CA Savaree informed the Commission that there will be an interdepartmental report at the next Council meeting about code enforcement, asking for some broad direction from Council on how staff should approach code enforcement issues.

C Gibson pointed out that Mr. Chapman, 2917 San Juan Boulevard, obtained his grading permit before the November 15th deadline. PP de Melo stated that the entire grading ordinance needs to be reviewed, and Chair Parsons asked staff to take a survey of communities in the Bay Area to see how their ordinances read with regard to grading moratoria. CA Savaree commented that her experience in the past has been that if people cannot finish a project by the November 15th deadline, the City has had success in going to court and getting temporary warnings where people had to do winterization measures on the site in order to insure that the hill will stay where it is. Staff will monitor this project to determine how close Mr. Chapman is to completing the work by November 15th.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m. to a regular meeting on Wednesday, November 7, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. at Twin Pines Senior and Community Center.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP

Planning Commission Secretary

*Audiotapes of Planning Commission Meetings are available for review
in the Community Development Department.*

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment